

MEMORANDUM

April 19, 2006

TO: Library Board

FROM: B. Parker Hamilton, Director
Montgomery County Public Libraries

SUBJECT: Director's Quarterly Report: January Through March 2006

Montgomery County Public Libraries is truly where the County Reads, Where the County Learns and Where the County Meets. Our staff changed and impacted the lives of residents through our English Conversation Clubs, programs for children, voter registration partnership and computer classes. Residents attended heritage celebrations at our libraries and read and discussed numerous books. We participated in many community events and celebrated Library Lovers' Month.

I have highlighted for you some of our happenings.

ADULT PROGRAMMING:

Book Discussions

Marilyn Goldstein of the **Aspen Hill Library** led the discussion for Hosseini's *Kite Runner* at the January local FOL Book Discussion Group and is currently working with them to choose titles for next year. In February, the group discussed *Devil in the White City* by Larsen and in March, the discussion will center on Ellis' *Founding Brothers*

The Great Books group of **Chevy Chase Library** discussed *The Double Helix* in January.

On January 17, the **Damascus Library** book discussion group read *John Adams* by David McCullough. This program was made more lively because C-SPAN cameras (a four-man crew) were present to tape the discussion for airing on the weekend BookTV program. The program aired on Saturday, February 4th at 3:00 p.m. and on Sunday, February 5th at 3:00 a.m. Library Manager Karen Miller reported "it was quite exciting to watch the crew set-up – they even hung spotlights from the ceiling tiles, put table microphones around the table, and gave discussion

leader Chris Lundy a clip-on microphone. All participants overcame their initial nervousness and the discussion was wide-ranging, intelligent, and showed that everyone had gained a great deal of respect for John Adams and the world in which he lived. Taped copies are available from the Damascus staff or directly from C-Span. We received nationwide compliments including an email and several letters from North and South Carolina. One participant told us of a relative that called to say they had seen it in the Midwest, without having been told about it ahead of time. All of them complimented Chris Lundy on her excellent skills as a mediator and the very interesting discussion.”

The ongoing adult book discussions continue to be very popular and well attended at **Davis Library**. In December *Blink* by Malcolm Gladwell was discussed. It was noteworthy that this nonfiction science title attracted more men to the group than usual. January’s title was *The Birth of Venus* by Sara Dunant, led by Rita Tull. This novel set in Renaissance Florence offered many topics for discussion: art, politics, the religious fanaticism of the Counter-Reformation and the limits on women’s lives in the period. February’s title was *Small Island* by Andrea Levy. This prize-winning novel about Jamaican immigrants in England after World War II was received very enthusiastically by the group. They admired Levy’s skill in communicating the voices of people on all sides of the racial divide with empathy, and evoking the atmosphere of wartime London with haunting immediacy.

Adults at **Fairland Library** welcomed local author, Brenda Rhodes-Miller to a discussion of her work *The Laying on of Hands*, at the African American book discussion this month.

The Adult Book Discussion Group of **Kensington Park Library** met on Tuesday, February 28th for the discussion of the book, *Escape from Slavery: the True Story of my Ten Years in Captivity*, by Francis Bok. During the discussion of the book a telephone call was received from the author, who thanked the group for choosing this book for the African American Heritage Month book discussion, particularly at a time when events in Darfur, in the country of Sudan, were in the *Washington Post* newspaper, and in other newspapers throughout the United States. After having shared the trials, tribulations, and experiences of a boy who endured ten years of slavery, the discussion group was pleased to hear of the success of the protagonist of the book, the author, Francis Bok, who now resides in Kansas City.

Sue Unger has facilitated a book group at **Long Branch Library** which meets on the third Wednesday of the each month for the past four years. This past year several new members have joined. One new member is a visiting professor from Wichita State University. For Black History Month, he led the discussion of *The Known World* by Edward Jones. Sue has compiled a list of all the books (44 titles) the group has read over the years to use as a Reader’s Advisory tool.

Barbara McClayton, **Olney**, was the leader for the January book discussion of the *Kite Runner*. On February 14, Barbara Michaluk led the discussion of the nonfiction work, *Nickeled and Dimed*.

The Kite Runner book discussion at **Poolesville** on January 30th went very well. One of the participants was from India and actually was a kite runner. She brought in a huge roll of string and some of the kites she used as a child. In addition, since she knew people who lived in Afghanistan at the time of the Taliban takeover, she had second and, in some cases, first hand knowledge of the culture, political and other conditions for this area.

Ralph Hitchens from the **Poolesville LAC** arranged for Dr. Emilie Amt from Hood College to come and talk about medieval monasteries as background for the book discussion of Heloise and Abelard by James Burge.

Judy Ku is the staff liaison to the Potomac Chinese Language Book Discussion group at **Potomac Library**. These meetings continue to be a great success, thanks to Judy's involvement. Her hard work at acquiring book selections is greatly appreciated by the group. As a "thank you" to the staff, the Chinese Book Discussion members treated the entire staff to a professionally prepared Chinese feast as well as huge boxes of apples and oranges for "good fortune" in the New Year. They also honored Judy Ku by inviting her to a joint book club dinner presented by the Chinese Book Clubs of Gaithersburg, Rockville and Potomac.

Also at **Potomac**, The English Language Book Discussion group continues to grow in popularity. Three of the recent titles have been, **Conspiracy of Paper**, **The Binding Chair** and **Arthur and George**.

The bi-monthly book group for international literature, "Reading 'Round the World," at **Quince Orchard Library** met in February to discuss *Burger's Daughter* by Nadine Gordimer. The Bilingual Spanish/English group, with the help of staff liaison member Isabel Black, held an organizational meeting in January to plan the 2006 reading program. They started off their new year in February by discussing *Zorro* by Isabel Allende. Adult Service Librarians Kathy Gower, Micheline Fleurant, and Mimi Bolotin, respectively, led the Librarian's Choice Book group in discussions of *The Time Traveler's Wife* by Audrey Niffenegger; *The Member of the Wedding*, by Carson McCullers; and *The Sound and the Fury*, by William Faulkner. The African-American Book Discussion group read *Passing by Samaria* by Sharon Ewell Foster in December. In February they read *Forbidden Fruit: Love Stories from the Underground Railroad* by Betty DeRamus. Selections for the Winter Chinese books discussions were *Cheng lun zhi sheng (Perishing)* by Yu Dafu ; *Meiguo she hui fu wu (Social Services in the United States)* by Li Guohua; and *No-per-erh chih lu (Lives of the Laureates: Thirteen Nobel Economists)* by William Breit and others.

Royal Stokes was the second author to visit **Silver Spring Library** for the 2005/2006 Speaker Series. Friends' Vice-President Marilyn Wisoff introduced his book, *Growing Up with Jazz*. Marilyn has also continued the monthly Friends' of the Library Book Discussion group.

Susan F. Cohen of **Special Needs Library** initiated for the first time a book discussion group for people who are deaf. In January, the group read their first book, *Three Junes* by Julia Glass. In February, the group read two books: *So B It* by Sarah Weeks, a children's book and *Good in Bed*

by Jennifer Weiner. The group started out with six people but has grown to its maximum group size--11 participants. It's a very appreciative group of people who have just begun to realize not only the incentives a discussion group offers but also the benefits of using libraries. The major advantage of limiting this book discussion to people who are deaf is the ease of communications through sign language without the complexity of following discussions through the use of an interpreter. During its meetings, Susan taught the group how to reserve and renew books online, check into their accounts and also gave them exposure to Reader's Café.

The African American Book Discussion group at **White Oak Library** discussed *Is Bill Cosby Right?* Unforgivable Blackness by Geoffrey C. Ward and *My Soul Looks Back in Wonder* by Juan Williams.

Residents also discussed Blink by Malcolm Gladwell and The Plot Against America by Philip Roth. Both of these discussions were led by **White Oak** staff member Kay Hornback.

Francie Gilman led the **Special Needs Book Discussion** group in January. Brick Lane by Monica Ali, and February *To America* by David McCullough. Members choose books based on whether they are available from Talking Books and in large print. Some time at each meeting is given to listening to and critiquing the narrators of the commercial and Talking Book tapes.

Literary events continue going strong, with the usual large turnout for the Chinese book discussions, and the Mystery book group adding new members every month at **Gaithersburg Library**.

The African American Book Discussion group of **Rockville Library** under the leadership of Dianne Betsey is also enjoying great success. January's attendance reached an all time high of 22. In February the group of 21 people met to discuss "A Walk through Darkness".

Computer Classes and Tax Forms and Assistance

At **Aspen Hill** Janet Meyers continues to draw mostly senior citizens to her introductory computer classes which staff recommends regularly to patrons who have trouble navigating the catalog.

The 2005 federal and state tax forms were put out for the public in a self-serve display; the **Damascus Library** is the only location in that area that provides this service.

Davis Library is offering Tax Preparation Assistance on Thursday afternoons from 1:00-5:00 p.m., courtesy of AARP/RSVP volunteers. Appointments are necessary.

At **Fairland Library** the tax program is proving as popular as ever this year and volunteers are pleased to be able to work on Friday mornings again. Four tax preparers lead by Ralph Byrd, all of whom are retired from the IRS, complete forms for senior citizens and for those of moderate

incomes who sign up through the AARP. In addition, adult staff is responsible for making tax forms available for the community.

The computer classes at **Little Falls Library** are becoming increasingly popular. Every class is fully booked. Previously there were problems having full classes. Currently, staff usually has to turn people away. The Adult Services Librarian hopes to overhaul the searching classes and cover slightly different information. In some cases she thinks a lot of the activity is due to word of mouth publicity. The Adult Service Librarian believes the design of the courses, to get people up and running in an hour helps sell them.

Many residents are now newly-registered voters thanks to three voter registration drive events held at the library in February. And, tax preparers are assisting low and moderate income residents on both Saturdays (Community Tax Aid) and Wednesdays (RSVP) at **Gaithersburg Library**.

Individual computer tutorial training at **Long Branch Library** started in February. Based on customer requests, Mark Ames created three tutorial topics to offer: Using the Internet, Email and Hints for Online Searching. Using a mouse and typing tutorials are also available. These tutorials are offered on the second and fourth Thursday of the month. Once again based on requests, these sessions are offered in the evening. These sessions have proven very successful. The Gazette gave them top billing; sessions have been booked through May. The publicity also re-advertised the Saturday morning sessions which are also well attended.

Olney Library has offered a computer training program for about a year. It has grown from three offerings per month, to an average of five per month. There have been over 150 individual tutoring sessions. Many of the students find it so helpful that they want to immediately sign up for additional sessions. There are four tutors overseeing the classes and two additional individuals have expressed interest in tutoring. At this rate the computer tutoring program will need its own volunteer coordinator.

Mimi Bolotin of **Quince Orchard Library** finished her fall introductory computer sessions in December. The two sessions were devoted to the basic functions of Microsoft Word. Each session was fully subscribed with a dozen participants.

The beginning of the New Year at **Wheaton Library** got off to a good start with the introduction of adult computer classes. The classes are offered every week except the fourth week of the month or the week that there is a holiday closing. The response from the public is positive and the instructor is busy teaching the curriculum to full classes every Tuesday & Thursday. The course offerings are *Introduction to Computers, Introduction to Word, Introduction to the Internet, & How to do Email*.

Special Events

At **Aspen Hill Library** Marilyn Goldstein arranged for a special event honoring **African American Heritage** on February 22nd. Dr. Priscilla Ramsey, from the Maryland Humanities Council Speakers Bureau, spoke on “John Edgar Wideman, Contemporary Black Novelist.”

At the **Correctional Center** a **Black History month** window display of photos and biographical information about famous people and Black Firsts was coordinated with a countertop display of books and a book-list (content courtesy of Readers’ café). A Model Learning center teacher brought his class to the library for quick book presentations and an opportunity to select materials for their writing assignment.

Local best-selling author Susan King appeared at **Damascus** on February 27th, in celebration of **Library Lovers Month**. King, who writes romances and historical fiction, spoke on the topic “The Making of a Book: From Idea to Publication.” High tea was served, with finger foods and desserts provided by a local caterer and the Damascus LAC. Approximately 50 people attended the discussion, which had been advertised in MCPL branches and on the library website, through local churches, and in the *Washington Post* and *Damascus Gazette*. Ms. King donated several autographed copies of her books to be raffled and the winners were thrilled with their prize.

On Saturday, February 25, the **Davis Library** celebrated **Library Lovers month** with the New Hots Jazz Orchestra. This 15 piece orchestra, which included former library staff, now library substitutes, Rita Isenberg and Laurie Mielke, had the audience up on its feet and dancing up a storm. The Davis Friends of the Library had a table encouraging membership, and Hershey kisses were distributed to everyone.

At **Fairland Library** Connie Blake, of the Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune Chapter of the Association for the Study of African American Life and History, presented a talk about the legacy of Mary Bethune, Coretta Scott King and Rosa Parks in celebration of **African American History Month** and **Library Lovers Month**.

Area families participated in a celebration of the **Lunar New Year** at **Gaithersburg Library** presented by the Gaithersburg Chinese School on January 28. This program made the front page of the *Washington Post’s* Metro section, which ran a photo of some of the young performing artists in vivid color.

The **Olney Library Lovers** celebration this year involved asking customers to make Valentines by responding to the writing prompt, “I LOVE MY LIBRARY.” Over 150 customers participated in the weeklong event, creating more than 90 Valentines, touting everything from storytime to materials to the staff. Each customer who mailed a Valentine at a service desk received a library themed thank you gift in return. The Valentines were sent to FOL Executive Director Ari Brooks with a request that she share them widely! The Olney Friends used the occasion to publicize their group. They had a balloon festooned cart in the lobby, where they

made available postcards to send to government officials, applications to join the Friends and the latest quarterly newsletter.

At **Potomac** the musical series for this quarter was a free Chamber Music Concert featuring The Chevy Chase Ensemble performing Mozart's Trio #7 in E Flat Major for piano, viola and clarinet, as well as three pieces by Mozart and Schubert for piano, clarinet and soprano.

Susan F. Cohen of **Special Needs Library** continues to work with the Learning Disabilities Association of Montgomery County, MD, Inc. in co-sponsoring library programs, one of which was on *What You Don't Know Can Hurt You!* on accommodations and strategies for students with disabilities on January 30th. Since the topic is of great concern to over 50 parents who attended, staff is working to ensure materials on this subject continues to be adequately available in the libraries. The speaker, Sandi Mercer, presented excellent information and is available to speak at other libraries at no charge.

In an effort to better promote available Montgomery County library services to children with disabilities; Susan and Chris Borawski, **Wheaton Library**, co-presented *Reading is for Everyone: Library Services for Children with Visual, Physical and Learning Disabilities* on February 28th for parents, teachers and child care providers at the Wheaton Library. Both Cohen and Borawski shared with a small, but an appreciative audience of eight, information on library resources and services both Wheaton and Special Needs Libraries offer. This also presented an opportunity to clear up any misconceptions about the Talking Book program, which was perceived by some people to be only for children who are blind.

Children's Librarians Linda Berg, Renee Blumenkrantz and Susan Hefter celebrated Library Lovers Month in the **Davis Library** children's room by offering a three day "Create a Valentine" program. Many beautiful and artistic Valentines were created by approximately 300 people—children and adults.

The **Davis Library** featured a new program in February. Guest Storyteller, Kit Bloom, presented "Into the Wind" which featured stories, a Braille book and related Braille activities for preschoolers.

Library Manager, Kay Bowman, was on the Maryland Library Association's Disaster Relief Committee which was formed shortly after Hurricane Katrina devastated the Gulf Coast. The Committee adopted a sister library in Hancock County Mississippi. Individuals, groups and library systems throughout the State responded by contributing money, time and materials. In December, several members of the Committee were able to drive a fully stocked bookmobile (bookmobile was donated by Allegany County) to the town of Pearlinton, Mississippi in time for the Christmas holidays. Pearlinton was almost totally devastated by the hurricane and the small library that they had was being used as a shelter. To date, \$14,000.00 has been collected to assist the Pearlinton Community.

Micheline Fleurant of **Quince Orchard Library** oversees the Spanish Conversation Club. Under the guidance of volunteers who are native speakers, drop-in participants meet weekly in small conversational groups to improve their Spanish fluency. Five native speakers rotate covering the sessions. Twelve of the participants celebrated the holiday season with a “fiesta” at Chevy’s restaurant. Micheline Fleurant reported, “The flavor of the conversation and the cuisine were in keeping with our class. Elena and Francisco, our gracious volunteer teachers, helped with the menu and we ordered ‘en español’. This was truly a fun evening for all of us”.

The **Conversation Club at Gaithersburg** is running well and remains well-attended. There are often 30 or more people in attendance any given session. Gaithersburg Library is fortunate to have a core group of dedicated volunteers who are committed to working with the staff to make this a successful program. The Conversation Club (county-wide) was written up by Senior Librarian Ann Stillman, with help from Mimi Bolotin of Quince Orchard Library, for a NACO award.

Maria M. Escobedo, a Librarian at the Hyattsville Public Library in Prince George’s County, attended a session of Gaithersburg Conversation Club, to observe how it works. They are starting a similar program in PG County and wanted to see how it is done here.

CHILDREN’S PROGRAMMING:

The spring Born to Read series at **Bethesda** got started with a bang—62 parents and children attended and enjoyed themselves thoroughly. On March 7th, there were 84 adults and children in the program. Annette Klause does the program and has received some very nice complements about how well she captures the attention of babies.

Carolyn Maddox and staff of **Fairland Library** host daycare visits one or two times per week, as their teachers call-in for class visits. Tuesdays and/or Thursdays have become something the community depends on to introduce young children to the library.

Olney is no longer the only Sunday library offering children’s programs. **Bethesda** and **Fairland** began offering programs earlier this fall. **Gaithersburg** is gathering information in anticipation of beginning children’s programming before the end of this service year. Eighteen children and adults attended the December 18th Olney Sunday family storytime program. They all agreed that everybody loves stories, songs and games about cookies! The January program, *BRR It’s Cold*, was held on Saturday January 21st and Sunday January 22nd.

The Special Education Class visits at **Davis Library** have picked up. Now there are four different groups visiting regularly. In December, six group visits with a total of 68 children and caregivers, January there were 12 visits and 122 children/caregivers and in February there were 10 visits and 98 children/caregivers.

Children's programming at **Germantown Library** for 18 months to 36 months continued, often with record numbers (January – 8 programs with a total attendance of 462; an average of 58; February – 8 programs with a total attendance of 532; an average of 66), sometimes overflowing out of the Discovery Center into the Picture Book area of the Germantown Library.

Between December 13th and January 17th, **Noyes** conducted 3 Born to Read programs, 4 Twos & Threes programs, 2 Family Storytimes, 2 Afternoon Storytimes, and 1 preschool visit.

Attendance at the afternoon storytime has grown, with 46 in attendance on one recent afternoon. Children who started coming to the baby programs are now preschool age and still enjoy coming to the library for stories. Sarah, age 5 and one of the regular patrons at Noyes, came in with her list of questions on a piece of paper 1" by 1". It is exciting to see these young children developing the literacy skills of both reading and writing.

Children are enjoying the new toys **Noyes** received with ERF funds. Staff was able to purchase several, which teach some basic literacy skills, such as letter recognition, rhyming, and spelling words.

The Children's staff of **Rockville Library** presented 17 preschool programs in February, one of which was to the Beverly Farms Preschool. The programs included Cuddles (newborns to 23 months), 2's and 3's and story times for 4-6 year olds.

On alternate Saturdays, Eve Burton of **Twinbrook Library** presents a family story time. This has grown in attendance of 35 to 40 each time. Our popular Music at the Library series is a big hit here at Twinbrook. There have been some very exciting programs including:

- Music from Colombia presented by a father and two daughters playing violin and guitar and singing in Spanish.
- The NIH Chamber Singers sang a lovely program of Holidays Around the Year
- A piano concert featured top quality pianist, Leticia McDonald from the Philippines, playing an all Gershwin program.
- African American History Month was celebrated with a performance by Second Story Duo with an outstanding African drummer
- Washington National Opera presented a program about Hansel and Gretel, featuring a very talented volunteer soprano, followed by craft activities.

Vera Ramaty continues to do an amazing job of getting musicians who are enjoyed by the audience. Most of these musicians perform without cost. This program series is very popular with the community.

Book Discussions

Each month Stephanie Weiss of **Fairland Library** stages a Young Reader's Book Discussion for first through third grade students, and the Burtonsville Book Club for fourth through sixth grade students. A craft accompanies the themed discussion.

The three book clubs for school-aged children at **Gaithersburg Library** met each month this quarter. Attendance is usually in the double-digits for the first & second-grade club and single digits for the others. One mother called Jan Derry to express her gratitude for the book club as a venue for her son to express his love of literature and to interact with other children his age.

The Kids' Book Club at **Quince Orchard**, for grades 4-6, discussed *The Last Holiday Concert* by Andrew Clements in December, under the guidance of Karen Shapiro. In January the choice was *When the Circus Came to Town* by Laurence Yep. The February choice was *The Time Hackers* by Gary Paulsen.

Computer Classes and Tours

Cathy Wetmore stepped out of her usual YA role and conducted an introductory Internet class for 6 Brownie Girl Scouts (and 2 leaders) on February 18th at **Damascus**. The girls needed to search the Web and visit several Girl Scout websites as part of their work toward a merit badge.

At **Fairland Library** Stephanie Weiss launched the database class for children in which she demonstrates how to use various parts of the KidSite of the MCPL website. She surveyed to find that children and parents prefer the seven o'clock time for this class and therefore, it was changed from the 4:30 time slot. Children register for this popular twice-monthly class.

Mary Jane Heinbuch, **Olney**, conducted a tour and introduction to the public library for the new school opened in the Refuge Church two blocks from the library. Five children from grades 3-5 attended.

Mark Gochnour and Marco Scappa, **Poolesville**, gave a group of 10 home schoolers and caregivers a library tour and reference/computer training on January 12th. As was prearranged, each child came with a question to ask for staff's assistance. Although, the group was small, Mark and Marco were kept busy as they fielded questions.

Sixteen ESOL students from Richard Montgomery High School visited the library and were given a tour of the building and its online resources. They were eager to learn and make use of the library resources.

Special Events

The Rockville Chinese School presented a **Lunar New Year** holiday celebration on February 11th at **Bethesda**. Ninety people of all ages attended this family program with wonderful dancing, spectacular costumes, drums, martial arts, and an amazing dragon.

Bethesda's Library Lovers Day was a big success with over fifty children participating in the Valentine craft, and approximately the same number attending Mark Jaster's brilliant mime

performance as a medieval jester. Thanks go to the Bethesda Friends, who not only paid Mark Jaster's fee, but also funded the craft equipment and supplies.

Melida Riedemonn, **Bethesda**, hosted Ssuuna, the presenter for **African-American History** month. Originally from Uganda, this entertaining storyteller opened a window on African culture as he wove stories with music, played on authentic African instruments and introduced the audience to dance from his native country. He showed how our cultures are similar and taught the children to respect the differences. There was plenty of audience participation, and Melida herself dressed up in an African costume for the event.

Rueyfen Harmon, **Chevy Chase**, presented a **Chinese New Year** program, with a Lion Dance, performed by the Chinese Youth Club. The Lion Dance costume was exquisite and the dance and drumming were fascinating. The meeting room was completely filled with about 250 people attending, and another 100 viewing the dancers upstairs. The Library looked wonderful as it was decorated with unique Chinese New Year posters and paper lanterns!

To celebrate Library Lover's Month, Stacey Varner and Maria Burguera of Long Branch **Library** threw a Curious George's Anniversary party with stories, crafts, balloons, videos and snacks. Highly successful!

Kensington Park held its program celebrating **Chinese New Year** on January 28th. This year the Li-Ming Chinese Academy performed, and presented a program which featured "new year traditions for the family," the Lion Dance, folk dances, Zither playing, and Chinese Wu-Shu. This program has always attracted large crowds, and this year was no exception. Approximately two hundred persons (200) attended the program. A story about the program appeared in the *Kensington Gazette*.

The Twinbrook Tellers appeared also at **Kensington Park** on February 11th as part of the programming celebrating Chinese New Year. The group presented "Chinese Folktales," in which members of the Twinbrook Library Youth Storytelling Club participated.

In January regular programming resumed at **Rockville Library** and the feature was a **Chinese New Year** celebration on the 28th. The Kuang Chi Chinese School demonstrated the Chinese yo-yo and the Chinese Fan Dance, both performed to Chinese music. Chinese calligraphy and paper folding were also demonstrated. Ninety children and adults attended the program. Certificates of appreciation were presented to the school from MCPL and Senator Barbara Mikulski.

The highlight of the winter programming for the last six years has been the Multicultural Winter Family Festival at **Silver Spring/Mobile Services**. This year the Silver Spring Chapter of the Friends of the Library provided all the funding for these special February Saturday programs for families. The first program, a spectacular **Chinese New Year** Celebration of music, crafts and martial arts by the Chinese School of the Chinese Christian Church of Greater Washington was arranged for free by Yuli Estler. That program and the **Soul-in-Motion Players with African**

drumming drew the largest turnouts – each attracted audiences of over 100. The fourth program in the series featured **East Asian** cultures with Indian dancer Sudha Bhagwat. Susan Levine arranged with a local teenager from BCC High School to provide a mehndi demonstration of hand painting. Between the children lined up for the hand painting and the dancing with Ms. Bhagwat, it was a lively afternoon.

Kit Bloom, librarian for the blind from the **Maryland State Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped**, presented a well-received inclusive program for an audience of 30 children at the Twinbrook Library in February. As a veteran in presenting programs, she offers staff an opportunity to learn new techniques that can help include children with disabilities in library programs. She is scheduled to present children's programs for several other library branches this spring.

As a program offering for **African American Heritage Month**, the Erika Thimey Dance and Theatre Company performed at the **Kensington Park** Branch on Saturday, February 25th. Approximately forty-five (45) children and adults attended this performance.

For **Chinese New Year**, **Twinbrook** continued their tradition of having Rueyfen Harmon present a special preschool story time. In addition to songs and stories, the program featured Chinese Calligraphy, a parade of the children around the library with the Chinese Dragon. Each child also had a chance to make a Chinese lantern and there were fortune cookies for all.

Another **Chinese New Year** program featured a guest Chinese origami artist who taught the Chinese paper and yarn crafts on a Saturday afternoon. This also proved very popular among children and their families

In celebration of **Black History Month at Wheaton Library** Anthony Cohen gave a video presentation documenting the journey of a slave from the United States to Canada using the Underground Railroad path. At some part of the trip he had himself shipped by crate to document the pain and suffering of those brave souls that tried every method imaginable to escape the bondage of slavery. The program had an attendance of 57 people. Another popular program was the **Chinese New Year** celebration that had an audience of 300. The program was highlighted by the performance of the Lion Dance. An acrobatic, highly physical dance the audience clapped with enthusiastic approval as the Lion dance performers jumped swayed and reached out into the audience in search of red envelopes. What a fun event it was, perfect for families and adults. The children's staff appeared at Sligo Middle School Parents' Night and introduced library services. About 100 people were in attendance.

February is the Library Lover's Month and as every year, the **Friends of the Library, Little Falls** Chapter presented a terrific "Nicolo Whimsey" show, to the audience of well over 200. Another special Saturday program of African Drumming, also sponsored by the Friends, took place on Saturday, Feb. 25.

White Oak presented a special event program, in cooperation with the **Chinese American Parents and Students Association (CAPSA)**, on January 21st, which featured a demonstration of Chinese paper-cutting. Well over 50 parents and children attended the program.

On Saturday, March 4th, the Culkin School of Irish Dancing also performed at **Kensington Park**, again as part of the branch's programming in celebration of Irish American month. This program attracted an audience of 103 adults and children, and was indeed enjoyed by all.

Library Lovers Month is always festive at **Potomac**. With local FOL funding, the manager purchased 500 pens in Potomac green with our address, phone number and web site printed on them. Customers were given a free pen as they filled out our heart postcards. Staff handed out packages of candy hearts to children throughout the month and generally, "marketed" our services under the auspices of Library Lovers Month.

COMMUNITY EVENTS:

On Monday, January 30th, Michelle Katz, producer from Channel 7's Good Morning Washington, taped a 10-second spot that ran on February 6th. The **Aspen Hill** Children's Room with students and teachers from the Weller Road Elementary Head start program, Susan Modak, Becky Sung and Steve Frechette were featured.

On February 18th, Aspen Hill celebrated the Year of the Dog with a presentation by the Northern Virginia Experimental Chinese School which included songs, dance, music, paper folding and the Chinese version of yo-yos. The Wong School of Boxing presented a wonderful, noisy and entertaining Lion Dance which is known to bring good luck to the over 220 adults and children who attended the program at the Aspen Hill Library.

The Friends of the Library of Chevy Chase put together a candidate's forum on library issues, to be held at the Chevy Chase Woman's Club the evening of March 30th.

For much of February the **Damascus** community has been involved in the hearings for the Damascus Master Plan and the Damascus By-Pass. Library Manager Karen Miller attended hearings and made sure that relevant information was available to the community.

The second community meeting on the new **Germantown Library** was held.

In March, Maria Burguera of **Long Branch Library** participated in the Early Childhood School Readiness Fair. The Fair, coordinated by the Silver Spring Judy Center, is held in conjunction with the Montgomery County Public Schools Pre-Kindergarten/Head Start Program registration at the Long Branch Community Center.

Mary Jane Heinbuch, **Olney**, attended Math Night at Magruder High School on March 9th. This was an evening meeting for all Pre-K families in the Magruder cluster. She prepared a

bibliography of parent-teacher titles, picture books, and non-fiction titles to assist parents in helping their children with math as well as offering library cards and information about library services.

This very special community event at **Potomac Library** this year was the **Chinese New Year** celebration beautifully planned by Helena Luk. Attended by families, and numbering well over 100, this program included the ever popular and spectacular Chinese Lion Dancers who danced all through the library to assure the library Good Fortune for the New Year. The Lion dance is performed by the “East Rising Lion Dance Troupe” under the direction of Mr. Mok-yi Chow. Mrs. Irene Liu demonstrated Chinese brush painting and our Potomac Library Chinese shelving assistants lent their talents to help the children with a paper cutting and folding activity. Staff were treated to an hour of interactive storytelling by the enchanting Chinese storyteller, Linda Fang. Senator Rob Garagiola attended again this year and welcomed all of the guests.

Cindy Counihan, Library Manager at **Quince Orchard** participated in **Maryland Library Day** in Annapolis on February 1st. After cheering for Kay Bowman and Irene Padilla (MSDE) as they received on behalf of Maryland libraries a resolution of appreciation from Senate President Mike Miller, Cindy joined Nancy Aldous (Citizens for Maryland Libraries) in making the rounds of Montgomery County legislators’ offices to deliver packets of information and to urge them to support the forthcoming capital projects bill for libraries. Kay, Cindy, and two library citizen advocates were able to meet with House Ways and Means Chair Sheila Hixson’s legislative aide and with Kevin Hughes, the committee’s fiscal expert who is writing the library bill. The day ended with the Maryland Library Association reception in the Senate office building, with Kay Bowman presiding. Parker Hamilton, Eric Carzon, and Gail Bailey (Library Board) also attended, as well as Brian Auger, former manager of Rockville Library.

Special children’s events at **Aspen Hill** included Spanish/English story time with Marco Scappa on January 14th, and February 25th, and a wonderful program by Baba Jamal Koram to help the children celebrate African American Heritage on February 11th. The Washington Opera will present “Hansel and Gretel” on March 18th.

As part of February’s Library Lovers’ Month celebration, the **Silver Spring Friends of the Library and the Silver Spring LAC** hosted a book and bake sale on Saturday, February 11. Cheri Eitel, book sale chair, coordinated this event, and staff and volunteers brought goodies for the bake sale. They netted \$500. The **Library Lovers’ Day** on February 11 also held a storytelling component for families. Candace Wolf wove stories from Latin America, with valentine making for the families afterward.

Susie Andrews and her **Mobile Van** have been successful in filling many community requests for visits, in addition to her weekly schedule of daycare visits and after school Van stops. On January 27th, she visited Rockview Elementary School for the first in a series of three visits with a focus on reading. The Van was a hit with families at this evening event, and they crowded on to hear Susie’s tour and sign up for cards. The steady stream lasted for over an hour.

Susie also visited the Faith United Methodist Church Preschool Center for Reading Day. The focus was on reading and books, and each child was allowed to select a book of their choice from the Van collection while the teachers also checked out materials.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH:

Voter Registration

The Department partnered with the Board of Elections and former staff member, Gilberto Zelaya for a very successful voter registration drive. The following libraries participated: Correctional Center, Aspen Hill, Germantown, Little Falls, Silver Spring, Bethesda, Poolesville, White Oak, Olney and Davis.

At the **Correctional Center Library**, a second voter registration listed specific voting rights and restrictions for incarcerated people and for inmates with felony records. Manager Joan Deacon coordinated this project with Gilberto Zelaya's voter registration drive at the public libraries. The informational flier he provided, in both English and Spanish, was enlarged to poster size in the Corrections Workforce Unit, and the posters were then posted throughout the facility in inmate housing pods. Library Advisory Committee volunteers visited housing units in March to register people for the gubernatorial election.

Susan Modak of **Aspen Hill Library** attended Strathmore Elementary Reading Night. She set up a table of giveaways and library handouts. She also spoke to about 50 parents in the computer lab about using online resources for homework and other library services.

On February 1, Susan Modak coordinated a program with Parkland Middle School to discuss on-line access for Spanish speaking parents to access information regarding their children's performance, material to be covered, school events, etc. Spanish-speaking LAS Steve Frechette gave an introduction to the Library system on how to acquire a County library card. The hope is that Parkland will meet regularly at **Aspen Hill Library** so that parents will learn about the library, its services and using the library's computers to access their children's reports on EDLine and to that end, Parkland was here a second time on March 1st.

Irene Brigg, PSA met with Luis Cardona, the Youth Violence Prevention Coordinator. MCPL and the Youth Opportunities Center are in the early stages of partnering to help the County achieve some of the recommendations from the Gang Prevention Task Force. To date, we have selected and delivered approximately 5-6 boxes of age appropriated books. They were a mix of young adult titles, some from the Reading List and other titles that may be of interest to young people of varying ethnic and racial backgrounds.

Annette Klause, **Bethesda Library**, visited the Mom's Club of Bethesda. She presented an abbreviated storytime, explained the library system's commitment to early literacy and how it's

reflected in storytime programs, and informed them about resources for parents available in the libraries.

Kathie Weinberg, **Bethesda**, made her first solo visit to the Greentree Shelter and conducted a simple lively program just right for that audience.

Rosemary Yorke, **Bethesda**, emailed a Power point presentation to some PTA president's that they could choose to share with parents if they were unable to schedule her to speak at a meeting.

Rueyfen Harmon, **Chevy Chase**, presents storytime programs at Rosemary Hills Head Start each month; in January, she also presented a Chinese New Year celebration.

Gaithersburg Library managers, Lillian Snyder, Linda Gimourginas and Ann Stillman attended Gaithersburg's State of the City event in January. The evening offered a good opportunity to remind stakeholders in the community of the key role played by our libraries.

A surprising number of customers took time to remark positively on the coverage of the services we provide to new Americans with special focus on **Gaithersburg Library** which appeared in the *Gaithersburg Gazette* and twice in *Washington Post* feature articles. Some of these individuals noted that although they are long-time library users, they were not aware of the array of services provided to an ever more diverse population. Several even offered their services as volunteers.

Jan Derry of **Gaithersburg Library** made two visits-out to Whetstone Elementary school for Family Literacy Nights (one for pre-K to 2nd grade and one for grade 3 to 5). Families of children at-risk for failure were introduced to materials and services that may be useful to them. Some of the families have already come in to the library to check out materials or use the Language Discovery Center (LDC). Building Bridges, a program from the Maryland Infants & Toddler services visited in February for a special story time from Jan Derry and a session in the LDC where Building Bridges staff modeled the appropriate use of the facility for the mothers in the group.

Tricia Reynolds of **Germantown Library** visited McNair Elementary School's Book Fair night in February. John Salitrik visited Clemente Middle School and met with 75 children. Maria Pedak-Kari read to 55 second graders at Lake Seneca Elementary School for "Read Across America" Day on March 9.

The children's staff of **Kensington Park Library** visited the Rockview Elementary School Pre-K program on January 25th and March 1st as part of the Early Reading First program. Twenty one (21) children participated in each of the programs. On February 22nd, the staff visited the 2 and the 3 and 4 year old classes at Bright Eyes, another Early Reading First site. There were 14 two year olds and 20 three and four year olds in attendance.

On February 8th a group of librarians (the Preschool Services Team) from Fairfax County Public Libraries came to see **Noyes Library** and discuss the facility and programming.

Diane Monnier and Dan Beavin of **Rockville Library** met with a representative from the newly established Mattie Stepanek Foundation. Mattie lived at King Farms and was an inspiration to children and adults throughout the country. MCPL owns many of his books and staff hope to work with this group to create some sort of memorial in the new library.

Judy Furash of **Silver Spring Library** introduced new moms and very new babies to library services and a sample “Born to Read” program at the Holy Cross Hospital Resource Institute.

Judy Furash and Carlos Valderrama, Circulation Services Manager at **Silver Spring Library** hosted an evening visit from ESL parents and children from Rosemary Hills Elementary School. The ESL teacher arranged for the PTA to sponsor dinner and a bus to the library so that attendance was excellent. Carlos Valderrama provided the library information and tour in Spanish – a tremendous help to Judy, and much more comfortable for the Spanish speaking families.

Susan F. Cohen of **Special Needs Library** set up a library exhibit on Montgomery County Library services for people with disabilities, which was reviewed by over 300 attendees of the Jewish Disability Awareness Conference called Opening the Gates of the Torah on December 4.

Fran Ware, **Wheaton Library** Manager is on the nominating committee for the Wheaton Silver Spring Kiwanis and is working on introducing a speaker for one of the April meetings. March 1st the Wheaton Town Meeting held at the Gilchrist Center drew a large audience as residents, and business owners gathered to meet with local County Council representatives, Tom Perez and Marilyn Praisner to discuss the downtown Overlay Zone and the possibility of eliminating the Site Review, an expensive process that is only in practice in the Wheaton area.

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS:

Susan Modak of **Aspen Hill Library** has also planned with Nayer Roughani (HHS) for Literacy Parties to be held in libraries (Aspen Hill and Extended Partners, two a month March – June). ERF-HHS will present the trainings. ERF- MCPL will provide the meeting places and underwrite the \$3000 cost.

Also, Pam Roberts of **Aspen Hill Library** worked with the staff at Enoch Pratt Free Library to provide training for the Joint A/J HOS meeting held on January 17th, and sought out Barnes and Noble as a partner for the training.

Some time ago the **Bethesda Friends of the Library** received an anonymous donation of a pre-1700 book. Due to its age, rarity, and value, they decided to donate the book, on behalf of the Friends of the Library, to a rare book library rather than offering it to a dealer for commercial

resale. After research and consultation with local scholars, they made a short list of suitable rare book libraries and decided to donate the book to the Folger Shakespeare Library in D.C; this was formally done on Monday, March 20th. They have also purchased a facsimile edition that will be cataloged and added to the Bethesda collection.

The Bethesda Urban Partnership conducted a program for children on December 11th at **Bethesda**. It was very successful, with approximately 75 in attendance. Jane Dorfman, **Little Falls**, told stories followed by elaborate craft projects.

Bethesda Librarian I Patricia Buck arranged a series of craft demonstrations in the main lobby opposite the circulation desk. Artisans of the Potomac Craftsman's Guild showed off their work in the display cases and in programs on January 28th, February 2nd, 11th, and 25th. The programs were popular with adults and children, especially the spinning wheels and weaving.

On Sunday, March 12th, students from the Bethesda-Chevy Chase High School Drama club came to **Bethesda** and gave a half hour preview of their up-coming production of *The Phantom Tollbooth*, based on Norton Juster's book. The actors wore their costumes and brought their props. Staff made copies of the book available to the audience.

Chevy Chase Library Manager Kathie Meizner is chairing the committee presenting the program for the May 6th Celebration of Children's Literature, in partnership with The Children's Book Guild of Washington, Montgomery County Public Schools, and Montgomery College. This will be the last year of partnership for this event with Montgomery College.

Chris Lundy, **Damascus**, has created a "voucher" for Damascus Help clients who need assistance with job help searches. Wendy Dukes, Damascus Help Director, has picked up these vouchers for distribution to her clients. The Damascus FOL is underwriting the project to encourage HELP clients to use the computers and to allow them to print off up to 10 pages related to job hunting and resumes. The group was thrilled that the library offered them these extra services. A set of directions for the staff on how to handle the vouchers has been distributed.

Davis Library continues its ongoing partnership with the YMCA Youth & Family Services. In March, two programs will be presented at Davis. The first, on March 13 is "Building a Positive Body Image: Helping our Kids Feel Good about Themselves" and on March 15 "Embracing Diversity: Making our Community Safe for Gay and Lesbian Youth."

With great sadness, the relationship with the Scotland Community has ended. The Center lost its child care provider. Davis staff does not know at this point if a new childcare provider will be hired. They have been encouraged to call if the situation changes.

Fairland's partnership with Paint Branch High School finally show the fruit of staff labors after several years of effort when they began the September Library Card Sign-up month program. This year Dr. Gary Dorr, Media Specialist, pushed to get the whole school involved in signing

students up for library cards with the goal of increasing the use of databases for Internet searches. With the cooperation of the principal, each English teacher listed students who needed library cards. As a result, Fairland staff is preparing cards for about 600 students from the school. Staff looks forward to more fruit from this partnership.

Germantown Library celebrated Library Lovers Month by joining Ronald McNair Elementary School's "One Book, One McNair" celebration. This year's book was Patricia Polacco's *Thank you, Mr. Falker*. The Discovery Room was set up with copies of Polacco's titles, books about bullying, dyslexia, teaching and art. The video of Patricia Polacco reading the book was run continuously. Friends' membership applications and Library Lovers postcards were handed out. This is the second year Germantown Library staff have been invited to join in this McNair program. It was very nice to tie it into the Library Lovers campaign.

The **Black Rock Center** for the Arts invited the **Germantown Library** to join it in applying for a grant that focused on jazz from NEH/ALA. They pooled their efforts, located a scholar, got the writing done and the approvals signed all in record time. If successful in getting the grant, this would be a wonderful beginning to an active relationship with a new neighbor in the Town Center.

Through a collaborative partnership with the Health and Human Services Department, the Early Reading First Program, and Montgomery County Public Libraries, an Early Reading First Literacy Party was held at **Kensington Park** on Wednesday, March 8th. Participants learned how to read with children to make the experience productive and to achieve the objectives of the Early Reading First program.

Sue Unger, **Long Branch Library**, demonstrated Rosetta Stone to Belen Bryant from the YMCA (Youth and Family Services Division). Ms. Bryant is the director of the Carroll Ave and Quebec Terrace Community Centers. She hopes to use this resource with adults who participate in her evening ESOL programs at these apartment complexes.

Long Branch co-sponsored a celebration of the 30th Anniversary of the Vietnamese-American community and the 25th anniversary of the Boat People S.O.S. A traveling photo exhibit was mounted on our walls which portrayed the evolution of the Vietnamese-Americans from the tumultuous voyages of 1975 to the thriving communities of today. A truly wonderful display enjoyed by many customers. Staff is discussing the possibility of future displays.

Naomi Milliner and her design team prepared a submission for MCPL and Montgomery County Government review for the commemorative garden she is planning for **Olney**. The design includes a seating area, native plants and a commemorative plaque. The design was approved in February and a memo of understanding is being drafted.

The first meeting of the **Olney FOL** in more than a year resulted in the election of four directors and a new President, Nena Ickes. A lovely front page article in the January 25th issue of the *Olney Gazette* featured retiring President, Eva Shankman.

In order to encourage frequent library use, the **Poolesville** LAC sponsored a raffle for kids, adults and high school students. Participants had to visit the library a certain number of times and check out an item. So much interest was expressed in the Library Passports for kids that the library ran out of them. Parents of children who missed out on the first run were contacted by library staff when the reprinting was done. This “contest” of 10 visits in 10 days resulted in children receiving a McDonald’s \$5.00 coupon. The first child to achieve this goal (a two year old program attendee) had never been to McDonalds. At the conclusion of the raffle at the end of February, the daughter of one of the LAC members drew five names out of the large plastic container. In all but one case, the winners were long time users of the Poolesville Library. The winners received their choice of a \$25.00 gift certificate from three restaurants in town or Regal Movie passes. The prize money was donated by the LAC.

Potomac Library partnered with the YMCA Youth and Family Services to sponsor a program on dealing with social bullies and dealing with cliques and exclusion. It was attended by both parents and children. This popular program was covered by the *Potomac Gazette* because it dealt with such an important and serious issue. The library also cosponsored “Mastering the Art of Encouragement” which gave parents and caregivers positive strategies to build cooperation.

Work on forming a lasting partnership with Montgomery County Public Schools continues. Cindy Counihan of **Quince Orchard Library** and Gail Bailey of **MCPS** met with several of the media specialists who participated in the pilot library card project last year to find out what the problems were and to try to come up with alternative methods which might work more easily. Staff at Fairland Library is trying out a new approach to making the library cards en masse. Gail is working aspects of the partnership pilot into the developing strategic plan.

Suzanne Carbone, **Rockville Library** has also been working closely with SCORE to provide seminars for small business entrepreneurs and for people seeking to develop their businesses. The first seminars will be offered before the new library opens and are set to take place at the offices of Rockville Economic Development, Inc.

Joe Ann Stenstrom represents the libraries on the Advisory Board for Montgomery County Child Care Resource and Referral Center. As a member of this group she is also part of the planning committee for a three county conference for child care providers in July at which former **Rockville** Children’s Librarian Saroj Ghoting will be the keynote speaker. This is being planned with Anne Arundel and Prince Georges Counties and the University of Maryland conference offices.

Fran Ware (**Wheaton**), Marylouise Daneri (**Long Branch**) and Carol Legarreta (**Silver Spring**) collaborated on an ALA-sponsored jazz grant. They worked hard to make the grant application unique, and enjoyed the immediate enthusiasm of both the *Jazz Times*, a national publication based in Silver Spring, and the *Jazz Alliance International*, who loved the idea of presenting these workshops and live performances in library venues, where there would be no cost to

attendees and the locations would be very accessible. They will learn mid-June if they are a selected site.

The Wheaton Chamber of Commerce held three early morning programs with local bankers and health businesses to plan a couple of community events at **Wheaton Library**. The branch was also opened early to accommodate an early morning meeting with the Wheaton Redevelopment program. Joe Davis, Chair of the Wheaton Redevelopment Committee, and Fran Ware discussed ways the library can become actively involved in the community. As a result of library presence in the community a local Curves business is donating a gift to the Teen Health Fair. The Bloodmobile parked in the lot and offered the opportunity for people to give blood.

This year the **Friends of the Library** selected **Wheaton** as the kick off branch for Library Lovers Month. The Caribbean group Goombay gave staff and the public a joyful musical experience. The music allowed the listeners, in the middle of February to transpose them for a little while to a warm island paradise.

FACILITIES REPORT:

The agreement between St. Paul Travelers—the bonding company, and the County has been signed. Work has started again on the **new Germantown Library**, including work to complete the roof, which was one of the major remaining tasks. The County and contractor for the bonding company, Whiting Turner, have not agreed upon a completion date at the time this report is being written.

The Public Arts Trust has again expressed an interest in some public art of the **new Germantown Library**. Last year, although interested, they were unable to fund because they had committed their relatively small budget to other projects. They are attempting to find funding in FY 07. Even if they are unable to do that, they have promised to work with the DPL to help with the competitive selection process. Their expertise and assistance is welcomed.

The contract has been signed with the leasing company and the build out of the space for the new **Collection Management Unit** is underway. The building is expected to be ready by the end of April and the move will take place in May.

Fairland Library, Senior Librarian Jim Stewart, continues to take the lead on the installation of the upgraded **telephone system** at the branches. Since the last quarterly report, Kensington Park and Little Falls have gotten new telephones. Planning for White Oak and Olney has been done, and now DPL is waiting for Telecommunications to find time in their very busy schedule to do the actual upgrade. As soon as those two upgrades are completed, Gaithersburg and Noyes will be done – the last two. DPL hopes the project will be completed by the end of the fiscal year, but because Telecommunications has other projects, the timeline is uncertain.

Parker Hamilton, Barbara Norland and Eric Carzon participated in two **Capital Improvements Programs (CIP)** review sessions with the HHS Committee of the County Council. Generally, the Council agreed with the Executive's recommendations, and they said they would like to accelerate the Olney renovation and the new Silver Spring projects – back to their FY 05-10 CIP timing – if possible. The outcome will be known when the budget is passed in late May.

DPWT found funding to do a partial **carpet replacement at the Davis Library**, which has carpet that is badly worn and soiled beyond the ability to clean it. The carpet will be replaced nearest the entryway and all the way back to the stack areas, where there will be a transition strip between the two types of carpet. Because of costs, the stack areas, which are not as worn, will keep the old carpet. Some of the tile in the entryway and staff areas will be replaced as well.

The carpet behind the circulation desk was replaced at the **Little Falls Library**, because it was considered a tripping hazard and a safety issue. Unfortunately, the work order did not indicate that part of the workroom hallway carpet also needs to be replaced, and now another work order will need to be sent.

Work has been completed on re-shoring and waterproofing (parging) the leaking wall near the elevator shaft at **Aspen Hill Library**. This required digging down approximately 6 feet to expose the wall and resulted in major destruction to the garden by the front doors. During this process, the electrical lines to the lights in the parking lot were cut and as a result, the parking lot lights were not working. This problem has now been resolved but there is additional damage to the lower garden beds.

Aspen Hill continues to have problems with controlling building temperatures. The HVAC system is difficult to manage. The thermostats do not appear to work and the public access portion of building is extremely hot while the back workroom is freezing. Staff are in constant contact with Facilities to try to resolve the problem although they have been informed that short of a new system there is no resolution.

The alarm to the Community Room had been disabled during the construction of the new elevator. Although Facilities has been on site to repair this problem, the alarm is still not functioning. The buzzer to the back workroom, to alert staff that help is needed at the Circ desk is also not working at this time. It is believed that because the alarm and the buzzer are on the same circuit, once the CR alarm is fixed, the buzzer will also work.

The dumpster at **Aspen Hill** is being used by local residents to dump unwanted toilets, furniture, gardening tools, and other large items. Nancy Savas, Library Manager sends sincere thanks to Dan Connors for helping to clean up and take care of this unsightly mess.

It has taken over a year to get a permit for the new sign along Falls Road and it is finally a reality now! Construction has been taking place for a week now. The new sign read “**Montgomery County Public Libraries**” and under that will be “**Potomac**” with the address. The library is partnering with the Potomac Garden Club who will help landscape around the sign. The new

sign was designed and placed to showcase a memorial tree planted by the Garden Club last year to honor one of their past members.

STAFF ACTIVITIES:

Librarian II Bonita Glatstein planned (with Fairland LIII Carolyn Maddox) the Children's Books to Know meetings, which took place the middle of February. The **Noyes** staff and the Chevy Chase children's services staff presented wonderful skits about beginning readers, and Library Manager Kathie Meizner gave a presentation on evaluating non-fiction for children.

Library Associate Barbara Shansby is helping to edit the Children's Books to Know annotations, which were contributed by staff to earn CEU credit. Barbara will also be volunteering to staff the Library booth at Wheaton Plaza for the Month of the Young Child, and has been accepted into the University of Maryland MLS program.

Amy Alapati, Anita Fry & Virginia Krute, were guests of Woodfield Elementary School media specialist Patty Dougherty at the Meet the Author talk presented to students by Kevin O'Malley. He was highly entertaining, and, during lunch, he drew personalized cartoons of each of the J librarians' favorite animals (otter, mouse, and panda).

Anita Vassallo, John Salitrik and Cheryl Reed visited the Westminster branch of the Carroll County Library System in early March to see their ITG self charge machine. They were impressed with the variety of technological supports that the library enjoyed and the relaxed, positive risk-taking mindset of the staff they met and observed. Vending and change machines are in use, as are lockers where customers can pick up holds 24/7.

Librarian II Janet Bock had a pleasant visit with a librarian from Korea who was visiting the United States and stopping in to see various libraries.

Language skills represented by the Rockville library staff have increased with three new additions to the staff. One or more staff members can now converse with residents in the languages of: French (Irene LaClair); German (Irene Laclair and Anneli Levy); Russian (Jolanta Podgoreczna and Laura Maramba); Arabic (Rania Abijomaa); Farsi (Raeesa Farshori and Lisa Navidi); Hindi, (Raeesa Farshori) Japanese (Megumi Lincoln); Spanish (Marco Scappa on Sundays and Lisa Navidi); and Polish (Jolanta Podgoreczna).

Adult Services Librarian Lisa Navidi wrote articles for the *Gazette* and for the Reader's Café. An article "When is a Memoir Not a Memoir" caught the attention of Betty Valdes who arranged Lisa's debut appearance on her cable TV show "Que Pasa." Along with Jo Stallworth, she discussed African American History Month, as well as books, literature and book discussion groups.

Susie Andrews, Carol Legarreta, Nancy Benner and Peggy Sue Warren met in Rockville in February to discuss the repainting of the Mobile Van's logo to comply with the new graphics standards. Peggy had some designs to share and all agreed on the new logo, which will still retain the familiar rainbow loved by so many children incorporated into the design.

Susan Cohen consulted with Kit Bloom in drafting a *Five Year Plan of Library Service to Children with Disabilities*. It's nearing completion and pending review by staff.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT:

DAVIS: Jan McHenry attended the search training "To Google or not to Google" and then passed the training onto branch staff in two Friday morning sessions. Jan also volunteered to be a trainer for new Information Substitutes and conducted three sessions with other staff. She took a leadership role in compiling the new curriculum. Rita Tull attended two compulsory trainings for managers: "EEO/Diversity" and "Planning for Excellence." She continues to attend monthly Ninth House seminars. Rita also attended the SLIPS Meeting on January 5 and February 2 and both she and Jan McHenry attended the combined A/J Heads meeting on January 17. Kay Bowman and Rita Tull conducted two Friday morning training sessions on Customer Service values. All the children's librarians attended "Books to Know (Notables)" with the media specialists of MCPS. Linda Berg dressed up as a moose to demonstrate the "boy" appeal to *Moose Tales* and *Busy, Busy Moose* by Nancy Van Laan. Linda continues to attend monthly MLA Children's Services meetings; and she also attended Villa Julie College for an Early Childhood Leadership Conference. Her breakout session was "Teaching Social Language Skills to Children: The Dark Side of the Curriculum." She came back from that conference enthused by what she had learned. Jan McHenry attended the Small Business Reserve Program Training held by Rockville/DED.

Kay attended the MLA Executive Board meeting on January 17 and ALA Midwinter in San Antonio on January 20-24. She also attended the MLA Disaster Relief Committee meetings on January 18, MLA Legislative Day and Legislative Reception in Annapolis on February 1, Citizens for Maryland Libraries in Damascus on February 4; MLA Strategic Planning Meeting on February 8, the MLA Steering Committee on February 21; the Partridge Award at the University of Maryland, College of Library and Information Services, on February 28; the General Assembly hearing on HB 1380 on March 2; and the MLA Legislative Panel on March 10. As President of MLA, she submitted written testimony in support of SB 709 and HB 1380.

FAIRLAND: Katherine Esteves attended a statewide Circulation Supervisor's meeting on December 5. She returned with enough enthusiasm to get to work with her staff to re-organize the workroom.

Carolyn Maddox, Stephanie Weiss, Patricia O.Callaghan, Laura Carroll, Kathleen Reid and Charlette Stinnett attended the Children's Books to Know training. Laura Carroll presented a

funny story to the system-wide Children's Books to Know audience which included a snail costume.

GAITHERSBURG: Noel Tavano has been named to the Technology Committee and will be participating in the State training, "Leading from Any Position" in April.

Linda Gimourginas is co-planning the March Adult Heads of Service meeting. She is also progressing through the Manager Development Program by meeting regularly with her mentor and participating in the required training classes, including the Leadership Institute.

Irene Liu attended the Local Small Business Reserve Program training at Rockville and will be the resource person for staff for customers who need information about online registration.

All of the children's staff, Jan Derry, Teresa Kolacek, Vivian Narine and Noel Tavano attended the Books to Know training at Martin Luther King Middle School on February 15th. This training was held jointly with MCPS Media Specialists. They reported that was pleasant and interesting to see the collection at the modern Middle School.

Jan Derry is meeting periodically with Sue Nichols and Susan Cohen to plan the children's staff training planned for April on the topic of Inclusive Services for Children.

Ann Stillman attended "Creating Effective Meetings" at Johns Hopkins University in Rockville. It was quite informative, covering how to plan and run a good meeting, as well as what makes a bad meetings. She shared the information with the Executive Team at Gaithersburg, which meets once a week.

GERMANTOWN: Peggy Hansen, Tricia Reynolds, and John Salitrik attended "Children's Books to Know" training in February.

Peggy Hansen, Maria Pedak-Kari, Anita Vassallo and Bruce Williams have all attended the "Interviewing and Selecting Employees" training.

Francie Gilman conducted the first of two Friday morning trainings on the services at the Special Needs Library, as well as how to use ZOOM and JAWS on the ADA computer at the branch.

The January Circulation Staff Meeting focused on registering the new user and giving good customer service.

ROCKVILLE: Diane Monnier and Suzanne Carbone participated in several meetings to develop systemwide training on service to people with disabilities. The system training is based on a successful series developed for staff at Rockville and Special Needs libraries. The local series was designed to ease the transition from Special Needs to the new Rockville Library and to reassure the community that MCPL is committed to developing the highest quality service in the new library. Nearly all staff in both libraries has attended these training sessions which has

been offered on successive Friday mornings. Scheduling these sessions has been difficult; relying on help from Administrative support staff and staff members being willing to switch hours. The intensive training added to the stress level of their staff, but considered important in making a possible as a positive contribution to the overall health of MCPL.

Selected staff members received ASK US NOW update training delivered by State Coordinator Joe Thompson. The training prepared staff for the new Question Point Interface used in answering chat questions and for answering shared follow-up questions. Suzanne Carbone coordinated this training and continues to serve on the statewide planning committee for this initiative.

SILVER SPRING: Carlos Valderrama and Carol Legarreta worked intensely over several days in February to pull together a training plan for the branch staff. This plan will focus on customer service; then staff was registered for the appropriate county training. They now have a schedule for the entire staff on needed training and individual staff career goals. Also included are the in-house trainings that staff identified as needed at the fiscal year end staff day in May 2005. Carlos put all of this information in table format, which makes the schedule much easier to follow.

In house training this past quarter included a Special Needs training with Francie Gilman; review of MCPL's Mission, Vision, Values and Guiding Principles with staff; and a refresher on cash register and Pharos for Information staff conducted by Adam Greene and Carlos Valderrama.

Judy Furash, Susie Andrews, Susan Levine and Nancy Sillcox attended the "Children's Books to Know" training on February 15th, and they found the training to be most valuable.

SPECIAL NEEDS: In an effort to keep abreast on the latest technology for deaf and hard of hearing customers, Susan F. Cohen and Barbara Norland attended the DCPL's Technology Training Demonstration of the Interpretype and Video Relay Service on January 12th.

Susan organized, arranged for the panelists and prepared post-assignments for two sessions of the People First training sessions for the Special Needs-Rockville Library staff—one on *Serving Customers with Mobility Disabilities* and the second, on *Serving Customers who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing* during the months of December and January. The panelists were excellent. Francie Gilman organized and arranged for the speakers for the Talking Books segment of the training series in February, which presented a very nice introduction to the service.

Susan presented a one-hour training session for the staff of the Aspen Hill Library in February on TTYs, ADA PCs, Talking Books, Special Needs Library's Computer LAB and an update on the move to the new library.

The Department began offering its own four hour new employee orientation to MCPL on Tuesday, January 10th. New employees are scheduled for this orientation every other Tuesday, which is the employees' second day on the job (the first full day is spent in a County orientation

session). Staff Development Coordinator Kate Tavakolian worked with the OHR Team of Carolyn Hohlfeld and Robbin Holloway and with Director Parker Hamilton to develop the agenda for MCPL's orientation. In addition to an introduction to MCPL by a member of the Executive Committee, the employee receives information about the OHR website, personnel practices, Intellectual Freedom, and County and MCPL training opportunities. They receive a new employee notebook and orientation checklist, fill out the MCPL email account application, and walk to the Security Office at the EOB for their employee nametag. Four sessions have been held through Tuesday March 7 with 5 new circulation/information staff receiving the orientation.

Kate Tavakolian is working with Aspen Hill Library Manager Nancy Savas, Silver Spring Library Manager Carol Legaretta, Olney Senior Librarian Barbara McClayton, and Bethesda Senior Librarian Annette Klause to develop and test an orientation checklist and notebook for new information desk employees, as well as "scripts" for supervisors to use in orienting staff to certain checklist topics. The committee has identified 9 modules to be covered when training a new information staff person. Each committee member is responsible for developing at least one of the modules, as well as the list of contents for that training and the annotations for the applicable resources and references.

The Department funded 7 staff to attend the ALA Midwinter Conference in San Antonio January 20-25, 2006.

15 staff attended the "Computers in Libraries" conference at the Washington Hilton from March 22-24.

Over 100 staff attended the "Children's Books to Know" training held on Feb 14th and 15th.

Chief of Collection Management Kay Ecelbarger presented a 10 minute training session outlining the unique features of the library workplace and ten key policies and procedures we use for management of the Internet to the MC Security officers at three meetings on March 2nd.

Kate Tavakolian, Carolyn Hohlfeld, Robbin Holloway and Ana Rita Puertas-Meyers are developing a training program entitled "How to Interview" for those staff members interested in applying for the new Library Aide positions.

IT Manager Scott Kegley, Public Services Administrator Rita Gale, and Little Falls Library Manager Dianne Whitaker attended the SirsiDynix User's Group meeting in Nashville from March 5-8. Scott Kegley also attended API Refresher training while in Nashville on March 3 and 4.

Kate Tavakolian attended the Library Associate Training (LATI) Advisory Committee meeting on March 10th. The group discussed the possibility of reorganizing the modules that comprise the 90 hours of training. One proposed format would allow new Library Associates to enroll more quickly into the program and expand the program from the current "semester" concept to a

rolling 12 months. Another meeting is set for May 12th to continue discussions on updating this program.

TEEN PROGRAMS:

BETHESDA: Kathie Weinberg, **Bethesda**, is developing materials and a plan for a teen book review committee. Teens will review brand new books obtained from publishers and other sources and evaluate them as input into Capital Choices, a Metro area group of children's specialists who publish a best books list each year.

Because Sunday is a day when teens seem to have the least commitments, Kathie Weinberg is planning a **Bethesda** program for them on a Sunday in April. She is hoping to revive Rockville Senior Librarian Diane Monnier's popular book review project.

CHEVY CHASE: Information about the **Chevy Chase** Teen Reads Poster contest was placed on the MCPL website.

LITTLE FALLS: The scrabble club is small but enthusiastic. From time to time new people come and check it out. Two members wanted to participate in the national tournament in Boston. The Little Falls Friends were willing to pay their registration fees. They had a relative to stay with. But it turned out the timing of the contest was in conflict with their parents schedules. So there were no national entrants this year.

OLNEY: The **Olney** Teen Writing Contest wrapped up with submission of the winner's information to Judy Hruz of the *Gazette*. In addition to writing the community news column in the *Olney Gazette*, Ms. Hruz is in charge of the "Youth Press" section of the paper and promised to make sure that the story ran in all editions of the *Gazette*.

TWINBROOK: Elizabeth Valderrama continues to host the weekly Crochet Club. The group has decided to also read and discuss a book once a month. Every other month's book will be a Young Adult title, in hopes of drawing teens into the group.